

No. 14 - House & Senate Chamber Update

M. D. Millsap

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MEMBERS WATCH LIST-

WARREN CHISUM - wife, OMEGA

-courtesy of Patty Gray

A post on the Legislative Ladies Club Facebook page said Omega had recognized Warren and their daughter -this is a good sign. Thanks to Susan Combs for sending the contact info for Warren so that we can let him know of our concern for him.

JIM NOWLIN

Judge Nowlin indicates that he is improving little by little every day. He is using a cane more and getting back to the gym to strengthen his leg. It has been three months + and nearing four since the accident. He has a doctors review at the end of the month. He feels he is progressing ok so far and appreciates us checking on him.

BARRY TELFORD

As soon as we receive an update we will post it.

MARK STILES

Mark indicated to me that he was doing as "well as could be expected." He is still feeling weak but is having physical therapy every other day. Hang in there Mark!

NEW MEMBERS

Suzanna Hupp

Please join me in welcoming Suzanna to the Capitol Group. She served six sessions from the 74th to the 79th from 1996 to 2007 representing Lampasas County. She served with distinction and chaired Human Services.



Ron Clark - was suggested by Carl Isett and we're waiting on his response.

PLATFORM

Patty Gray and I would like to start the process of looking at new platforms. We plan to create a subcommittee to review alternatives so if any of you are tech savvy and would like to work on it please let us know. Bottom line is - email is OK, but it seems there must be a better way. Basics would be to have an easy way for any of us to "post" something and have a simple way to see the threads of conversation. Anyway, here we go.

KEVIN BRADY

Houston Chronicle - April 14, 2021

US Rep. Kevin Brady of The Woodlands to retire in 2022

U.S. Rep. Kevin Brady, a longtime congressman from The Woodlands and one of the most powerful Republicans in the House, announced Wednesday he won't seek a 14th term in office. Brady, who was first elected in 1996, is the top GOP member on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee and was its chairman as it drafted former President Donald Trump's tax rewrite in 2017. But Brady faces a term limit leading the committee at the end of 2022, which he said in his announcement was a factor in his decision not to return. "In the end, I'll leave Congress the way I entered it, with the absolute belief that we are a remarkable nation — the greatest in history," Brady said in an address at the Woodlands Area Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook Conference.

Brady is the second member of the Texas delegation to announce his retirement this year, following U.S. Rep. Filemón Vela, a South Texas Democrat. Their announcements come as Republicans are already pushing to take back the House from a slim Democratic majority — something Brady said in his announcement he was confident would happen. Brady's departure will leave open a reliably red seat north of Houston as Texas lawmakers work to redraw congressional boundaries. Brady won reelection last year by 47 percentage points and it is unlikely Democrats will be able to gain much ground there in 2022. He struck an optimistic tone in his announcement, saying he has not "lost faith in a partisan Congress and the political system" as he touted legislative accomplishments, including a new trade agreement with Mexico and Canada, a ban on surprise medical billing, and perhaps most notably, the GOP tax overhaul that he spearheaded in the House. "The tax cuts lifted millions of Americans out of poverty and gave hope to so many the old tax code had left behind," Brady said. "America recaptured the title of the most competitive economy in the world,

bringing manufacturing jobs and investment back home to America from overseas.”

-from The Quorum Report

DAN BRANCH

Dallas Morning News - April 14, 2021

Dan Branch: Texas cannot afford to sue Google

Texas faces serious budget constraints, with the pandemic, the winter storm and the failure of the electrical grid. Safeguarding Texas taxpayer resources has never been more important. The Legislature must determine how our limited taxpayer resources will be spent, and what programs need to be cut. Of all funding the requests to the Legislature, one sticks as a particularly low priority: taxpayer-funded antitrust litigation by the Texas attorney general’s office against Google, at a cost of \$43 million. With any tight budget, it’s important to establish priorities. Two of the biggest budget priorities this legislative session will be helping Texans recover from the pandemic and the winter storm. Then there’s funding for sustaining public education reforms initiated last session, higher education, health care and public safety, which account for more than two-thirds of our state budget.

With limited resources and expensive priorities already on the table, there needs to be a strong case made for utilizing taxpayer dollars to fund questionable and expensive antitrust litigation. State senators have rightly asked tough questions of the attorney general regarding the merits of using tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to fund this case, especially at this moment in time. This case brings great expense to the state and no guarantee of success. Beyond the issue of resources, this lawsuit is largely redundant. The U.S. Department of Justice has already filed its own antitrust lawsuit against Google. Texas taxpayers are already paying for this litigation indirectly through their federal tax payments. And unlike the state of Texas, the Justice Department has far greater scale and resources it can devote to this endeavor. Then there’s the question of the benefits a case like this will provide to Texas consumers. The actions by the attorney general’s office could cripple a business that during the pandemic has provided enormous benefits to consumers, as well as assistance to struggling small businesses. Specifically, Google’s service has helped consumers and small businesses work remotely and stay connected to customers, at no cost to them. This does not include the significant jobs and economic revenue the company generates directly for Texans.

-from The Quorum Report

KENT HANCE

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